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Bryan Pfaffenberger

THE NAME YOU TRUST

# Dedication

*For Suzanne, always*

Webster's New World™ Dictionary of Computer Terms,  
8th Edition

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## share

A file server utility for AppleTalk networks. transforms any Macintosh on the network into file server; the server's hard disk icon appears on user's desktop.

A small- to medium-sized computer program that performs a specific function, such as emulating a calculator. 2. In a program embedded in a Web document that, when clicked, is executed by the browser. Both of the leading Netscape Communicator and Microsoft Internet Explorer can execute Java applets. See *Java applet* and *Java*.

**AppleTalk** A local area network (LAN) standard developed by Apple. AppleTalk can link as many as 32 Macintoshes, IBM PC-compatible computers, and peripherals as user printers. Every Macintosh computer has an AppleTalk port; the only hardware required for an AppleTalk network is a set of LocalTalk connectors and ordinary telephone cables (called twisted-pair cable). AppleTalk networks are simple and inexpensive but quite slow; they are capable of transmitting only up to 230 Kbps. EtherTalk, in contrast, is capable of speeds of up to 10 million bps. See *EtherTalk*.

**Application** A program that enables you to do something with the computer, such as writing or accounting. As opposed to utilities, programs that help you maintain a computer.

**Application Configuration Access Protocol (ACAP)** A proposed Internet standard that transfers crucial user configuration settings (including address books, bookmarks, and preferences) to an Internet-accessible file. Because these settings are stored on the network instead of the user's computer, they are accessible no matter which computer is being used. ACAP potentially benefits anyone who accesses the Internet from multiple computers.

**Application control menu** See *control menu*.

**Application development system** A coordinated set of development tools, typically including a full-screen programming language with a compiler, linker, and debugger.

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and an extensive library of ready-to-use program modules. The use of an application development system lets experienced users develop a standalone application more easily than writing a program using a language such as C++ or COBOL.

**application heap** In a Macintosh, the base memory, the area of memory set aside for user programs.

**application icon** In Microsoft Windows 95/98, an onscreen graphic representation of a minimized program. The icon appears on the taskbar to remind you that the application is still present in memory. Double-click the application icon to switch to that program.

**application layer** In the Open System Interconnection (OSI) seven-layer model of computer network architecture, the first or lowest of seven layers, in which the data is presented to the user. At this layer, protocols are needed to ensure that products from different manufacturers can work together. For example, an e-mail program should use the same protocols for sending and receiving e-mail. When the data is ready to be sent to the network, it is passed down the protocol stack to the next layer, the presentation layer.

**Application-level encryption** In a computer network, the implementation of encryption by individual applications rather than at the operating system or network level. Web browsers usually implement encryption at this level.

**Application program** See *application*.

**Application program interface (API)** 1. A set of standards or conventions by which programs can call specific operating system or network services. 2. In Web servers, the standards or conventions that enable a hypertext link to originate a call to a program that is external to the server. See *CGI*, *ISAPI*, and *NSAPI*.

**Application shortcut key** In Microsoft Windows, a shortcut key assigned to launch or bring an application to the foreground. Application shortcut keys are also available in applications such as Microsoft Word and PC Tools Desktop to launch and control various features.

**operand** The argument that is appended to an operator, such as a spreadsheet program's built-in function. For example, in the Excel expression AVERAGE(D10:D24), the cell range D10:D24 is the operand of the AVERAGE function.

**operating environment** The total context in which applications function, including the operating system (OS) and the user interface shell.

**operating system (OS)** A master control program that manages the computer's internal functions, such as accepting keyboard input, and that provides a means to control the computer's operations and file system.

**operating voltage** The electrical voltage at which a microprocessor operates. Most microprocessors have operating voltages of 5 volts—a mostly arbitrary specification decided upon when the transistor was invented—but some chips run at 3.3 volts to save electricity (a real concern in portable computers) and to reduce heat output.

**operator** In programming, a code name or symbol that is used to describe a command or function, such as multiplying or dividing.

**optical character recognition** See OCR.

**optical disk** A large-capacity data storage medium, like floppy disks, on which information is stored at extremely high densities in the form of tiny pits. The presence or absence of pits is read by a tightly focused laser beam. CD-ROMs and CD-ROM drives offer an increasingly economical medium for storing data and programs. Write-once, read-many (WORM) drives offer erasable organizations to create their own huge, in-house databases. Erasable optical disk drives offer more storage than hard disks, and the CDs are removable. However, they are still more expensive and much slower than hard disks. See *interactive storage*.

**optical fiber** See *fiber optics*.

**optical mouse** A mouse that does not require a cord, like a mechanical mouse does, but that must be used on a special mouse pad. An optical mouse shines a beam of light onto the mouse pad, which conveys the mouse's position to the computer.